

RURAL DISTRICT OF RINGWOOD AND FORDINGBRIDGE.REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1946.

To The Chairman and Members of the
Ringwood and Fordingbridge Rural District Council.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you my fifteenth Annual Report of the Ringwood and Fordingbridge Rural District, which is for the year 1946.

In accordance with instructions from the Minister of Health, this report is again submitted to you in curtailed form, in view of the need for strict economy in the use of paper.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

Detailed information together with many tables bearing upon vital statistics and sociological circumstances is to be found in my Annual Reports up to the year 1939.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS.

Medical Officer of Health	-	Dr. C. Conyers Morrell D.P.H.
Senior Sanitary Inspector	-	Mr. R.A. Upstone, M.S.I.A, also Building Byelaws Surveyor and Housing Estate Manager.
Additional Sanitary Inspectors	-	Mr. W.W. Dyson, Cert. R.S.I. Mr. S. Maher, Cert. R.S.I. Mr. R.W. Johnson, Cert. R.S.I. (Commenced duties Sept. 1946)

Contributions to the salaries of the above officers are made under the Local Government Act, 1933.

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1946.

Area (in acres) 90,140. Population - Census 1931 - 18, 217.

Registrar-General's estimate of population at the mid year 1946 for purposes of vital statistics - 20,440.

Rateable Value at 1st. October, 1946 - £123048.

Sum represented by a penny rate 1945 - 1946 - £501. 13. 2.

<u>Live Births</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Legitimate	341	175	166
Illegitimate	35	16	19

Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated population - 18.4.

<u>Still-Births</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Legitimate	8	3	5
Illegitimate	1	-	1

Rate per 1,000 (live and still) births - 23.4.

<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
	267	129	138

Death-rate per 1,000 of the estimated population - 13.5.

Deaths from Puerperal Causes:

Puerperal Sepsis - 0. Other Puerperal Causes - 1

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age.

All infants per 1,000 live births - 18.6.

Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate births - 17.6.

Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate births - 28.6.

Deaths from Cancer (all ages) - 37.

Deaths from Measles (all ages) - 0.

Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages) - 1.

Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) - 0.

Cancer accounted for 13.0 per cent of all deaths. There were during 1946, 37 deaths attributed to this cause, of which 15 were males and 22 were females.

4 cases of suicide were recorded.

There were 7 deaths of infants under one year of age, and of these all were attributable to prematurity and congenital malformation at birth.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (other than Tuberculosis) during the year 1946: CIVILIAN ONLY.

Disease	Total Cases Notified.	Cases Admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Scarlet Fever	31	22	0
Whooping Cough	24	0	1
Measles	133	0	0
Pneumonia	29	0	4
Erysipelas	5	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	2	0	0

1 case of Ophthalmis Neonatorum was notified during 1946.
No untoward result.

TUBERCULOSIS - New Cases and Mortality during 1946.

<u>Respiratory</u>	<u>New Cases</u>	- 23	<u>Deaths</u>	- 5
<u>Non-respiratory</u>	<u>New Cases</u>	- 3	<u>Deaths</u>	- 1

There is no evidence of excessive incidence of, or mortality from, Tuberculosis in any particular occupation in the area.

Notification of infectious diseases is efficient.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Apart from outlying areas in the extreme north-west and a few isolated homesteads, practically the whole of your District is supplied by mains of the West Hampshire Water Company. The supply is constant, of moderate hardness, entirely free from metals, and has been consistently of the highest degree of chemical and bacterial purity. For a short period during the early months of the present year (1947) owing to exceptional disturbance of filter beds caused by the extremely inclement weather chloramine treatment of the water supply was temporarily increased in the interest of public safety and gave rise to a few complaints of unpleasant taste of water.

The availability of this elastic safety treatment at the water works is of exceptional value, the result of which has been that at no time has any illness ever occurred from the drinking of this Company's water supply. The slight taste of chlorine acquired by the water at such occasional times as it is deemed necessary is more than balanced by the assurance of bacterial safety, and it can as a matter of fact be readily removed in cases where it is disliked by simple boiling.

During the year extensions of the Company's mains have taken place as follows:- Godshill to parts of Woodgreen and Hale, and Rockbourne to Damerham and Martin. Within the next two years it is likely that the whole of your District will be covered by the Company's Mains. Shortage of supplies of essential materials owing to the aftermath of the War has alone been responsible for delay in fulfilling this desideratum.

During the year the Water Company continued to transport drinking water to residents in the Linwood area where wells generally remained dry. 120 inspections were made in connection with these well supplies. During the year 77 samples of well waters were submitted to bacteriological and chemical analysis. 35 of these were found to be polluted and 12 Statutory Notices were served in connection with 18 premises. As a result 16 premises with polluted supplies were connected to the West Hampshire Water Company's mains, and 3 were provided with wholesome supplies by execution of works where mains were not available.

SANITATION.

Ringwood Sewerage.

Disposal at your Sewerage Works has continued to be efficient and satisfactory.

Refuse Disposal and Fordingbridge Night Soil Collection.

Towards the end of the year your Council entered into a Contract with Messrs Manley and Co. for mechanising sanitary services. The Council's horses, vehicles and equipment were disposed of and mechanised collections commenced on the 11th. November providing for a weekly collection of tins and ashes mixed in the lighting areas of Ringwood and of Fordingbridge and a monthly tin collection only in the remainder of your District.

A site at Sandlohoath was purchased by your Council for use as a new Refuse Dump.

Mechanised collections of Fordinbridge Night Soil were also carried out under contract by Messrs Manly and Co., and night soil transported in the collection freighter to the Ringwood Sewerage Works where a composting scheme is in operation.

Fordingbridge Sewerage.

In spite of schemes considered from time to time the town of Fordingbridge and its environs remains without sewerage. In view of the fact that this town has now for some years been provided with main-water supply, and that the consequent tax placed upon cesspits leads to pollution of surrounding ground and pollution of natural water-courses in the neighbourhood, I would once again most strongly press that a main sewerage scheme be put in hand. In this connection I draw your attention to my detailed remarks contained in my Annual Report for the year 1945.

HOUSING.

In order that the Rural Housing Survey could be proceeded with it was found necessary to engage additional staff, a total of 1518 houses were surveyed during the year and categorised as follows:-

Category	1	191
"	2	339
"	3	802
"	4	3
"	5	183

No other routine housing inspections were possible but inspections were carried out on receipt of complaints and in these cases defects were invariably remedied upon service of informal notices. Statutory Notices were served in three instances only, one Section 9 and two Section 11.

A great deal of additional work has been undertaken in connection with the provision of temporary housing accommodation; a large number of huts on various sites, including disused airfields, have been taken over by the Council and comprehensive conversion schemes carried out.

BED-BUGS.

Two dwellings infested with bugs were disinfested during the year.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

Routine inspections were made at the Ministry of Food Slaughter house of all animal carcasses and offal. During the year 30,232 lbs. of meat were condemned as unfit for human consumption. In addition 128 tins of food stuffs, 49 lbs. of oats, 6 dozen fish-cakes, 4 packets of cereals, 84 packets of pancake mixture, 1 cwt. 2 qtrs. of herrings, 15 lbs. 14 oz. of bacon, 36 lbs. of cheese, 7 boxes of Kippers, 25 lbs. of margarine, 28 lbs. of egg powder, 6½ stone of kippers, 18 cases of milk, and 28 lbs. of suet at various food shops were found to be unfit for human consumption. All foods were voluntarily surrendered.

247 visits were made in connection with inspections of unsound food.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSE.

While the conditions appertaining to slaughter of animals and sanitary arrangements at the Ministry of Food Slaughter House situated in Ringwood are in general satisfactory, I would point out that the general structure of the premises is very definitely not of modern type, and I strongly urge that if this Slaughter-house is in the future to be used to any considerable extent that consideration be given to the erection of a building in keeping with the generally accepted constructive planning of a modern abattoir.

MILK SUPPLY.

Routine inspections of dairies and cowsheds were recommenced during the year. 132 inspections were made resulting in the service of 13 informal notices.

FACTORY ACTS.

Routine inspections were recommenced during the year. 128 inspections were made resulting in the service of 12 informal notices respecting sanitary provisions.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

Routine inspections of premises were made during the year as follows:-

Food Shops	137	Restaurant Kitchens	8
Bakehouses	22	Ice-Cream Premises	28

SHOPS ACT.

A comprehensive survey of all shops in the District was carried out during the year and detailed inspections were made. 262 premises were inspected - 288 inspections being made for this purpose. 7 informal notices were served and 5 certificates issued exempting premises from the provisions of Section 10(2) of Shops Act, 1934.

NUISANCES AND COMPLAINTS.

136 complaints were received during the year necessitating 637 inspections and visits. Complaints were as follows:-

Rats	19	Dampness	15
Cesspools and Drains	32	Dilapidations	39
Animals	2	Water Supply	10
Offensive Smells	3	Miscellaneous	51
Bugs and Fleas	2		

The majority of the nuisances were abated as the result of informal notices, Statutory action only being required in two cases.

SCHOOLS AND CHILD WELFARE.

The Medical Inspection of children in the schools is carried out by the Staff of the County Medical Officer, as also the conduct of Child Welfare, Tuberculosis, Dental, Ophthalmic and Ante-Natal Clinics.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, Notification of Births Act, Maternity and Child Welfare Acts, Midwives Act, and Venereal Diseases Act 1917, are administered by the County Council.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

The scheme adopted by your Council in 1939 whereby immunisation of children is carried out by private practitioners has continued satisfactorily. The prophylactic used has been Alum Precipitated Toxoid.

The number of children up to 14 years of age immunised during the year was 275. The number of children protected by immunisation resident in your District is approximately 80%. The total number of children immunised since the inauguration of the scheme in 1939 to the 31st. December 1946 has been 3981. Re-inforcement doses carried out were 62.

The scheme put forward by the Minister of Health in November 1945 which is fully detailed in my Annual Report for 1945 is now in operation and liaison in the matter between the County Medical Officer and myself for the general conduct of the scheme has been entirely satisfactory.

The following table of the incidence of cases of Diphtheria occurring in your District during the past eight years is indicative of the value of immunisation:-

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of cases</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>
1939	28	1943	4
1940	19	1944	0
1941	16	1945	1
1942	6	1946	0

THORNEY HILL COMPOUND.

I have made frequent and outspoken reference in my various reports during the past thirteen years to the extremely insanitary and unhygienic circumstances under which occupants of this Compound, men, women, and children, exist, which are entirely incompatible with every principle of modern hygiene.

It is deplorable that young persons working in factories and children attending schools should each day have to return to dwell and sleep under conditions but little if at all removed from those pertaining in the Middle Ages.

In my last Report I gave details of a deputation received by the Minister of Health and of a conference held at the Ministry of Health. As yet no result has accrued, and I await with anxiety but with confidence the decision and action of the Minister of Health.

During the year I was successful in pressing that at least this Compound should be provided with a wholesome water supply in place of the two dangerous shallow dip-wells upon which alone a very limited water supply was obtained. The result has been that two main-water standards giving a pure and wholesome supply from mains of the West Hampshire Water Company have been erected in the Compound at points reasonably accessible to the scattered occupants of the huts and hovels.

SCABIES.

Arrangements made whereby persons resident in the northern area of your District infected with Scabies receive treatment at the war-time Gas Cleansing Station attached to the Fordingbridge Cottage Hospital were continued during the year and functioned in a very satisfactory manner.

Medical supervision continued to be carried out by Col. R.W. Knox (retired I.M.S.) and treatment to be administered by personnel of the B.R.C.S. (Fordingbridge Branch) under the supervision of their Officer Commanding, Mrs. Harman. I again express my sincere thanks to Col. Knox and Mrs. Harman and her B.R.C.S. members for the very efficient manner in which this work has been carried out in a voluntary capacity. During the year 1946, 45 cases, consisting of 11 adult male and 16 adult females, and 8 male and 10 female children of school age and under have been treated. The medicament used has been benzyl-benzoate emulsion.

In addition 44 cases from Ringwood were treated at the Scabies Cleansing Station conducted by the Borough of Christchurch under arrangements made during the war between your Council and the Christchurch Corporation.

HURN AIRPORT.

During the year an Airport operated by the British Overseas Airways Corporation was inaugurated at Heathrow, Middlesex, at which Airport all passenger services were operated in place of as hitherto at Hurn Airport. Arrangements, however, were made whereby during inclement weather or for other reasons airplanes were diverted to Hurn

Airport, and in consequence arrangements made for medical examination of passengers etc. at Hurn Airport were continued. During the winter months a considerable number of airplanes were diverted to Hurn Airport and these arrangements were entirely efficient and satisfactory, and continue so to be.

GENERAL.

In January 1944 I reached the age of retirement and superannuation. Owing, however, to the circumstances of the War and consequent shortage of medical officers it was found not possible to appoint a successor to myself, and I consented to continue in your service until such time as this became possible. After three and a half years that time has now come, and this will be the last of my Annual Reports.

When I accepted appointment with your Council in 1932 I was already part-time Medical Officer of Health to the Borough of Christchurch and to the then Rural District of Christchurch, part of which became included within your District; and I had had several years of experience in Public Health work in one of the largest, poorest, and most densely populated areas of East London. During the first World War, apart from service at sea and in the trenches, I had also held Sanitary commands in France, and I had been selected as lecturer in Field Hygiene at a great R.A.M.C. Training Centre for Medical Officers. In consequence, I was able to bring to bear upon the sanitary problems of your newly combined District a fairly wide outlook.

On appointment I at once directed my attention to the very many shallow wells upon which at that time a very large part of your population was dependant for their water supply; numerous chemical analyses of these well-waters were carried out by myself and I found many to be frequently dangerously polluted, findings which later were amply confirmed by laboratory bacteriological tests. To-day, fortunately, but very few of these wells remain, and I am happy that my work contributed to and ultimately resulted in safe and wholesome main-water supplies being extended throughout almost the whole of your District.

Cowsheds and Dairies also received in pre-War years my special attention with the result that a marked increase in the standard of sanitation and cleanliness was brought about in a number of the more backward of these.

Further, my constant, insistent, and I fear at times tedious and even unwelcome, reiterations pressing for amelioration of the truly dreadful insanitary conditions under which a small section of your population lived, and indeed continues to live, in the Compound on Forest land at Thorney Hill, the nauseating details of which appear in many of my reports, at last resulted in a conference being held at the invitation of the present Minister of Health at Whitehall. The outcome of this will, I now feel confident, result in the Minister himself taking action in due course to end once and for all the possibility of such travesties of public health administration, though in no way the fault of your Council, being permitted to continue in the England of the future.

Though at first opposition from certain ill-informed members of your Council delayed the inauguration of a scheme for Diphtheria Immunisation in your District I ultimately secured its adoption and instituted intensive propaganda. The result has been that at the present time approximately eighty per cent of children resident in your area are protected against the infection, and the figure of Diphtheria incidence has fallen to an extremely low level. Moreover, no deaths from Diphtheria have occurred in your District since the inauguration of the scheme.

During the War years, though much of my time was occupied with the organisation and maintenance of Air Raid Precautions Casualty Services in the Borough of Christchurch, my main concern in view of heavy troop movements in your District and influx of population from urban slum areas was the control of infectious diseases. In keeping with most other Districts in this country no outbreak of infectious diseases of any serious nature occurred; in addition, particular attention was paid by me to the suppression of Scabies and the care of ailing children at the Government Evacuation Hostel which I administered.

Since the War the establishment of services of the British Overseas Airways Corporation at the war-time Royal Air Force Airport at Hurn received my special attention, and in liaison with the Ministry of Health and medical officers concerned I successfully organised a system for the medical examination of passengers and incidental sanitary precautions which now provide an efficient safeguard against the introduction into this country through this Airport of serious infectious diseases at present highly prevalent in tropical countries and in parts of Europe.

And so I take my leave contented that in many directions the general sanitation of your area has been raised to a far higher standard than that in which I found it, but humbly conscious that much still remains to be done, which, in the hands of my successor I have every reason to believe will in due course be accomplished.

I would commend to his special attention the sowering of the town of Fordingbridge which in spite of incessant efforts I have failed to secure, and so soon as the time is ripe the demolition of insanitary and obsolete dwellings in the town of Ringwood.

Without reservation I am happy to say that I have met at all times with the greatest courtesy on the part of your Council and also with the official help without which the aims and work of a Medical Officer of Health would be largely ineffective and abortive. To your several Officers in particular, past and present, I tender my very sincere thanks for their unfailing generous assistance in both legal and technical matters appertaining to my office. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with all of them.

While completing this Report it has fallen upon me to attend at Winchester a meeting at which selection was made of a candidate who was appointed as successor to myself as part-time Medical Officer of Health for your District, combined with part-time appointments as Medical Officer of Health for the Borough of Christchurch and as an Assistant County Medical Officer. The gentleman you have appointed, since he at present holds office as an Assistant County Medical Officer, already has some general knowledge of your District, and this knowledge, I am quite sure, will very materially assist him in familiarising himself rapidly with the many sanitary aspects and requirements of the area which shortly it will become his obligation to administer.

I wish him all possible success and a term of service under your Council as pleasant and agreeable, as replete with interest, and as wholly free from discordance and acrimony as my own has been.

In my retirement, in view of my especial interest and certain achievements in connection with vital statistics and demographic enquiry, my association with the Public Health Service will not be entirely broken, and I shall follow with deep interest the future welfare and development of your lovely District. I wish you all prosperity and success.

I am, gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

C. CONYERS MORRELL.

28th. July, 1947.

Medical Officer of Health.